

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 286

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, DR

SUBJ: DOMINICAN POLITICAL ASSESSMENT: FOURTH QUARTER 1975

1. SUMMARY. ATTENTION WAS DRAWN TO 1978 ELECTIONS AS PRESIDENT BALAGUER MOVED TO STRENGTHEN THE REFORMISTA PARTY, RENEWING CONJECTURE HE WOULD AGAIN BE THE PARTY'S CANDIDATE FOR REELECTION WHILE OTHER PARTIES GENERALLY DECLARED THEMSELVES IN FAVOR OF PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTION. PRESIDENT BALAGUER PARDONED THE THREE PUERTO RICANS CONVICTED OF BRINGING THREE DOMINICAN GUERRILLAS CLANDESTINELY TO DOMINICAN SHORES. TOLERANCE OF LOW-LEVEL EXCHANGES WITH CUBA CONTINUED DESPITE CRITICAL COMMENTS ON CUBA'S INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA. PLANS TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH EGYPT WERE POSTPONED. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN RECENT UN VOTING THE DOMINICANS WERE ON THE SIDE OPPOSITE THE US ON AN ISSUE WE DECLARED TO BE IMPORTANT, BUT THERE WERE EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES. PRESSURE IS GROWING TO REVISE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE FALCONBRIDGE FERRONICKEL AND ROSARIO GOLD MINING COMPANIES, THOUGH PROSPECTS ARE TEMPERED BY THE GOVERNMENT'S PRAGMATISM. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT MOVES TO CONSOLIDATE SUPPORTERS. REACTING TO DISAFFECTION AMONG PARTY STALWARTS AT HIS APPARENT LACK OF INTEREST IN REFORMISTA PARTY (PR) AFFAIRS, PRESIDENT BALAGUER
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APPOINTED A NEW SECRETARY GENERAL WHO IMMEDIATELY CALLED FOR

BALAGUER'S RENOMINATION IN 1978, AND ACCELERATED MOVES TO BRING DISSIDENT FORMER PR FORCES BACK INTO THE PARTY. AT THE SAME TIME HE EFFECTIVELY DEMOLISHED THE PARTIDO JUSTICIALISTA DOMINICANA (PJD) ON DECEMBER 7 BY SWEARING IN ITS PRESIDENT, GUARIONES LLUBERES MONTAS, AS A PR MEMBER. FIRST IMPRESSIONS FROM THESE MOVES WERE THAT BALAGUER HAD VIRTUALLY DECLARED HIS INTENTION TO SEEK REELECTION IN 1978, BUT THE TRUE INTENTIONS OF THE PRESIDENT REMAIN UNDISCLOSED.

3. THREE PUERTO RICANS ARE RELEASED. FOLLOWING VARIOUS EMBASSY APPROACHES AND CRITICISM BY MILITANT US HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS AND SEVERAL CONGRESSMEN OF THE 30-YEAR SENTENCE IMPOSED ON PUERTO RICANS GARCIA, GANDIA AND SAMPSON, WHO WERE CONVICTED OF LANDING THREE DOMINICAN GUERRILLAS ON A BEACH NEAR SAN CRISTOBAL, PRESIDENT BALAGUER PARDONED THEM AS A CHRISTMAS GESTURE AND THEY RETURNED TO PUERTO RICO ON DECEMBER 23. AN IRRITANT IN DOMINICAN-US RELATIONS WAS THUS REMOVED. A LACK OF HARD EVIDENCE OF THE GUERRILLAS' RETURN TO THE DR AT THE TIME OF THE TRIAL AND MEMBERSHIP OF ALL THREE MEN IN THE EXTREME LEFTIST PARTIDO SOCIALISTA PUERTORRIQUENO, WHICH ADVOCATES PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE, HAD COMPLICATED THE AFFAIR.

4. RELATIONS WITH CUBA EXPAND SLOWLY. CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA IS BEING REPORTED AND COMMENTED UPON IN THE DOMINICAN PRESS. MOST COMMENTS HAVE BEEN CRITICAL, WHILE EX-PRESIDENT JUAN BOSCH AND THE DOMINICAN FAR LEFT HAVE VOICED SUPPORT FOR CUBA'S ACTION. BOSCH'S APOLOGY WAS SO OVERSTATED AS TO DISCREDIT HIM AS A SPOKESMAN FOR ANY SIGNIFICANT SEGMENT OF DOMINICAN OPINION. MEANWHILE, THERE HAS BEEN NO PERCEPTIBLE CHANGE IN THE GODR'S TOLERANCE OF THE PRESENT VERY LOW LEVEL OF INTERCHANGES. DURING THE QUARTER THE QUARTER THE EXCHANGES CONSISTED OF THREE CUBAN VISITS TO THE DR (ONE A FIVE-MAN DELEGATION SPONSORED BY THE DOMINICAN COMMITTEE OF FRIENDS OF CUBA, ONE THE VISIT OF ANGEL PERNAS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY - REPORTED SANTO DOMINGO A-116 - AND ONE IN CONNECTION WITH EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON USES OF SUGAR CANE IN CATTLE FEEDING) AND TWO TO CUBA (MILTON MESSINA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CARIBBEAN COMMITTEE ON COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT AND A MUCH PUBLICIZED VISIT BY RADIO-TV COMMENTATOR ERCILIO VELOZ BURGOS). THE

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CUBAN NATIONAL BALLET, WITH ALICIA ALONZO, IS SCHEDULED FOR FIVE PERFORMANCES IN FEBRUARY.

5. RELATIONS WITH EGYPT - ON AND OFF. THE REPORT OF THE GODR APPROACH SEVERAL WEEKS AGO TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH EGYPT CAME AS A SURPRISE AS DID THAT OF PRESIDENT BALAGUER'S LATER ORDER TO HALT PREPARATIONS FOR FORMALIZING RELATIONS. WE DO NOT KNOW WHY THE MOVE WAS

POSTPONED.

6. THE DR VOTES AGAINST THE US IN THE UN. CONTRARY TO ITS CUSTOMARY SUPPORT OF US-FAVORED RESOLUTIONS ON IMPORTANT ISSUES OR ABSTENTION TO AVOID ISOLATION FROM LATIN NEIGHBORS, THE DR VOTED FOR THE TWO RESOLUTIONS OPPOSED BY THE US ON THE DECOLONIZATION ISSUE IN THE 29TH GA, ALBEIT ABSTAINING ON THE GUAM RESOLUTION. FOREIGN SECRETARIAT SOURCES HAVE EXPLAINED TO US THAT DR UN AMBASSADOR MORENO MARTINEZ, A MEMBER OF THE OPPOSITION SOCIAL CHRISTIAN PARTY, DISREGARDED TELEGRAPHIC INSTRUCTIONS TO SUPPORT THE US, BUT IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT MORENO FOUND ENOUGH AMBIGUITY IN THE FONOFF CABLE TO JUSTIFY HIS ACTIONS.

7. WILL THE FALCONBRIDGE AND ROSARIO CONCESSIONS BE RENEGOTIATED? PRESIDENT BALAGUER'S APPOINTMENT IN 1975 OF TWO SOCIAL CHRISTIANS - GUIDO D'ALESSANDRO AND ALFONSO LOCKWARD - AS SECRETARY OF STATE OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY AND AS TECHNICAL SECRETARY OF THE PRESIDENCY - HAS LED TO A COALESCING OF A GOVERNMENT GROUP AROUND THE PROPOSITION THAT THE MULTINATIONALS MUST CONTRIBUTE MORE TO THE COUNTRY AND BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO DOMINICAN NEEDS AND DESIRES. PRESSURES ON ROSARIO DOMINICANA, A GOLD AND SILVER MINING COMPANY, AND ON FALCONBRIDGE DOMINICANA, A FERRONICKEL PRODUCER, HAVE BEEN GENERATED BY ADEPT USE OF THE LOCAL PRESS AND RADIO. FORMATION OF A THREE-MAN COMMISSION TO STUDY REVISION OF THE FALCONBRIDGE AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REPORTED BUT NOT OFFICIALLY CONFIRMED. MEANWHILE A SHARP PUBLIC DEBATE IS TAKING PLACE ON A ROSARIO REQUEST FOR EXPANDED MINING RIGHTS. THESE MOVES COULD LEAD TO ASSERTION OF GREATER NATIONAL DEMANDS ON THE TWO FIRMS. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE PRESIDENT'S PRAGMATIC, RATIONAL AND GENERALLY CONSERVATIVE NATURE, THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT LIKELY TO PRESS FOR RADICALLY NEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH

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